

Remarks As Energy Bill Conferee

July 14, 2005

Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Chairman.

I hope this conference will adopt the balanced, bipartisan tone of the Senate, instead of the way we did it in the House.

Unfortunately, the bill passed in the House was written to cater to the special interests, rather than the interests of the American taxpayer.

One of the many special interest groups the House bill generously rewards is the producers of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE).

There are now hundreds of communities around our country trying to figure out how to clean up their drinking water that has been contaminated by this toxic fuel additive.

In its wisdom, the House decided to exempt the MTBE producers from any responsibility for this situation.

The House bill lets the MTBE companies off the hook and sends our local governments the bill.

For a House leadership that came into power condemning unfunded mandates...the unfunded mandate they have imposed on local governments to clean up this mess is astounding.

I sincerely hope the conferees choose to go with the Senate's responsible position on this issue.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to mention one modest proposal that I made during the debate on the House bill...

Escalators are used more than 90 billion times a year in the U.S.

The amount of energy consumed by their continuous operation is the equivalent of powering 375,000 homes. The energy cost to the nation is around \$260 million per year.

Many countries, however, use intermittent escalators, which activate only on detection of a passenger, and remain on standby when idle.

It is a proven and safe technology and would allow us to conserve 40 to 50 percent more energy.

In fact, replacing all the nation's escalators with Intermittent Escalators would save the county \$104 to \$130 million per year.

In light of the debate and the comments I received from Chairman Barton and the General Services Administration, I have amended my proposal and urge my fellow conferees to adopt my revised version in our conference report, which calls for a feasibility study on this important fiscal responsibility issue.

Thank you and I look forward to working with all of you on this conference report